881 On the eve of the ritual, the preparations begin. The youth's [302] body is painted black with genipap. On his face, a black line is drawn under the mouth and a circle under the eyes, which are elongated with a line at the corners. The father or uncles put the last touches on a large diadem. At dawn on the day of the ceremony, [946] the youth is led to the large ceremonial house built in the center of the Tapirapé village, and his hair is set to support the large [292] [237] ankungitana (diadem) made of numerous macaw, parrot, and duck feathers fastened to a base of muriti palm and hard wood and weighing about five kilograms. The hair is trimmed and tied into a roll [302] on the nape of the neck with a cord at least five meters long, to provide a base for the fastening of the large diadem. The lower lip [301] is adorned with a ceremonial quartz tembetá [Tr., cylindrical plug].

The ceremony itself begins late in the morning. For 24 hours [535] the youth dances continually, surrounded by his fellow tribesmen and accompanied by the songs and dances of men and women. He dances ill at ease, for he is soon tired by the weight and discomfort of the ornaments. Tapirapé tradition explains this ritual as a test of en- 773 881 durance for the young men. According to one legend, a Tapirapé ancestor called Xavanamu and his son Makanci were captured by an enemy tribe. Xavanamu was eaten, and his son was forced to dance under the weight of a large diadem and the numerous ornaments that covered his body. At the end of a long day of dancing, Makanci, who had retained his strength, managed to flee and disappeared into the woods followed closely by his foes. He vanished on reaching a large hollow trunk. Nowadays, Tapirapé youths wear ornaments similar to those left behind by their ancestor.

In 1941, when we witnessed the "hair-tying" of the youth 881 Kancinampiõ, several Tapirapé predicted that he would cry "for he would become very tired during the night," but the boy stood up valiantly to the test. It is in another way, however, that men recall their initiation. One of them said, "When I danced, I was more beautiful than at any other time." It is true that at no other time of life does the individual get so much attention and make such a show with such rich ornaments. And this during adolescence!

Thus, the Tapirapé turn this ceremony into an opportunity for fun, which their men recall more or less in the same manner as our youths recall their first ball.